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Rural School Consolidation

A
BULLETIN OF INFORMATION
ISSUED BY THE
OKLAHOMA STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION



1911

R. H. WILSON, - - - - - State Superintendent
E. F. PROFFIT, - - - - - Inspector of Rural Schools

Committee on Rural Schools

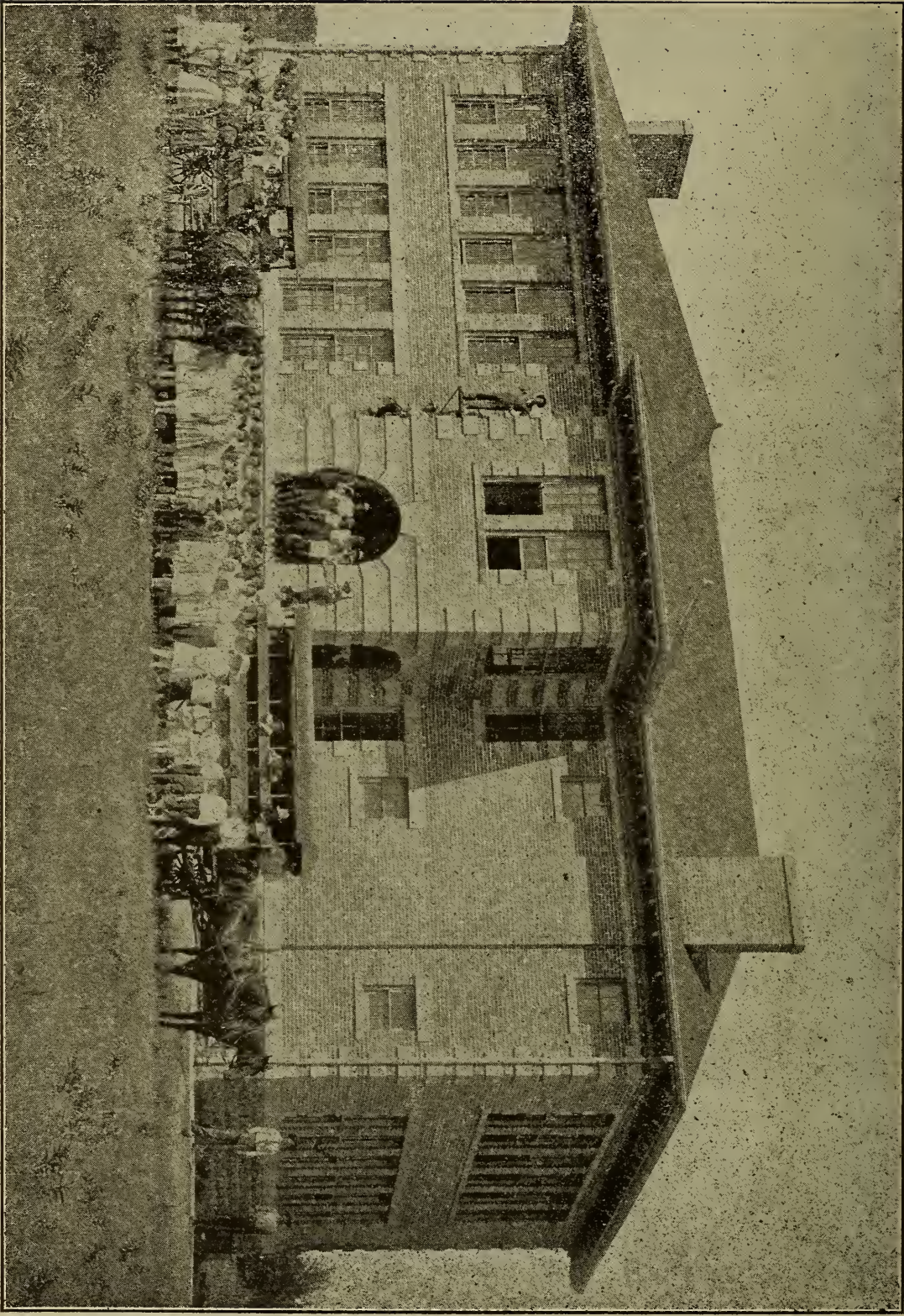
A. C. SCOTT, ROBT. DUNLOP, W. E. ROWSEY

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DISTRICT NO. 22—A CONSOLIDATED RURAL SCHOOL—ROGERS COUNTY, OKLAHOMA.
B. H. HESTER, COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT, CLAREMORE.

I have always been a firm believer in educating the farmer's child at home. I am further of the opinion that he is entitled to every advantage possible to be given him by the State in which he lives, believing that a better educated farming population will make a greater and better State and Nation. I am thoroughly familiar with farm life, and realize that the greater per cent of the farmers are not so situated that they can send their boys and girls away from home, and pay the necessary expenses while attending the high school and college. These conditions have made me a strong advocate of a consolidated school system.

Leaders of educational thought in all sections are advocating the consolidation of schools. Practically all of the county superintendents of Oklahoma are in favor of the movement, and they should be supported in their efforts to establish this system. In urging consolidation of schools in Oklahoma, I realize that while in many communities the conditions are ideal, there are also other communities in which consolidation is next to impossible. I would not advise that any consolidated school district be formed, (with a view to transporting the children), which has a valuation of less than \$300,000.00. It is my belief that such a condition would be burdensome. On the other hand, I insist that in all districts of \$400,000.00 valuation, it is advisable, and in districts where as much as \$500,000.00 valuation could be had, there is but little argument that can be offered in opposition to consolidation with transportation.

I do not advise consolidation where it has to be done by a bare majority of those interested in the school. A very strong minority opposing a bare majority will oftentimes make school matters very unpleasant. My experience has been that harmony in school affairs is one of the essentials to the success of the school.

The first step toward consolidation should be to secure the assistance and co-operation of the county superintendent, and be governed by his advice throughout, in these matters. For the purpose of encouraging the organization of a system of consolidated schools, the State Board of Education instructed its committee on rural schools to collect information and publish a bulletin. They have proceeded under many difficulties. This bulletin undertakes to explain how consolidated schools may be organized and maintained, and sets forth the comparative cost, and the amount of money that will be available from the State to aid the movement in each county.

My purpose in urging the Legislature to pass a law granting

State aid to consolidated schools, was to create a greater interest in such schools. I realize that the amount of money available from the State under the present law is inadequate to carry to completion so great an undertaking as organizing our schools into a consolidated system. I believe, however, that in the not far distant future the Legislature of this State will assist and encourage consolidated schools in a far more liberal way than it has by the recent appropriation. This may be done by appropriating more of the funds derived from the public building lands or by a direct levy.

My understanding of the present law is that each county will be apportioned its share of the money according to school population and that the apportionment of each county will then be divided among the consolidated schools of that county. This bill is included in full in this bulletin and from it you can learn the requirements which must be met in order to receive aid from this fund.

It is our purpose to encourage the up-building of the common schools. We feel that when the common schools have been properly provided for, the State institutions will take care of themselves. The tendency of the last Legislature was to assist the common schools more than has ever been done in the past. We trust that the interest of the country may be so aroused that this tendency may be stronger in the next Legislature and so on until we have effected the desired results and every child in the State of Oklahoma is within reach of a graded school.

Very truly yours,

R. H. WILSON,
State Superintendent.

September 7th, 1911.

CONSOLIDATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS.

The State Board of Education is heartily in favor of the consolidation of rural school districts, as provided for by the laws of Oklahoma. There is no reason why the boys and girls of the farm should not have, at their own homes, the same (or equivalent) advantages of education that the boys and girls of the town have. The only way we see to bring this about is by a system which shall make it possible:

First, to grade the country schools more effectively;

Second, to provide more efficient teachers;

Third, to secure better supervision;

Fourth, to provide for additional instruction above the eighth grade as the circumstances justify it.

The forming of larger districts from smaller ones will accomplish this. It has already accomplished it in many places. It is no new proposition, either in the country at large or in our own state. It is firmly established in several of the progressive states, educationally, in the country. More than a score of such schools are in operation in Oklahoma. So far as this Board is advised, not one of these schools, either in other states or in our own state, has reported that it would be willing to go back to the old system.

What is Meant by Consolidation.

By consolidation of schools is meant the uniting of two, three, or more small schools into one large and strong school, possessing a comfortable and sanitary building, two or more good teachers, and reasonable facilities for work. In many respects it is desirable to consolidate about a small village and to place the building there; but there is no reason why the school should not be located at the country crossroads. The purpose, in any event, is to continue and foster the rural school,—while enlarging its scope and efficiency,—and not to seek to make it over into a town or city school.

An almost necessary incident of consolidation is the transportation of pupils. This is generally accomplished by covered wagons or vans, arranged to be warmed when necessary, each wagon holding from fifteen to twenty children and in charge of a man of approved character and habits. There are those who claim that this cannot be successfully done. The all-sufficient answer is that it is being successfully and satisfactorily done, both in many consolidated districts in our own state and in multitudes of places in other states. The subject of transportation is one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of the adoption of the system, and it will be referred to again under the heading of "Cost."

Facts About Consolidation.

1. The first consolidated school was in Massachusetts in 1874.
2. Thirty-two States have a partial system of consolidated schools.
3. Massachusetts has consolidated schools in every county.
4. Indiana has consolidation in eighty-two out of ninety-two counties.
5. In North Dakota, the number of consolidated schools doubled in the last two years.
6. More consolidated school buildings were constructed in the United States in the past five years than during the twenty-five years preceding.
7. In 1889 Massachusetts spent \$22,118.38 for transportation; in 1908, she spent \$292,213.33.
8. In Virginia, the expenditure for transportation in 1908 was twelve times as much as it was in 1905.
9. Consolidation has been as successful in one section of the United States as another.
10. Not an instance is known where a consolidated school has been abandoned to return to the small district system.
11. In consolidated schools, twice as many pupils finish the eighth grade as in the same districts before consolidation.
12. One pupil out of every six enrolled in consolidated schools, goes to high school, while only one out of every thirty-six enrolled in the district school attends high school.
13. The average cost of schooling per pupil per day is less in consolidated than in the small district schools.
14. Twenty-seven per cent. more of the school population attends school after the districts are consolidated than attended in the same districts before consolidation.
15. Children start to consolidated schools seven-tenths of a year older, on the average, and finish the eighth grade two-thirds of a year younger than in district schools. The passing point is in the fourth grade.
16. Of the six million country boys and girls in the United States, two-thirds of them are in sections where they may be accessible to consolidated schools.
17. An assessed valuation of \$500,000.00 is sufficient to support a consolidated school without burdensome taxation. A much less valuation is sufficient in many localities.
18. Experience has shown that consolidation is most successful in districts of an area of from twenty-five to thirty-six square miles and that children should not be hauled a greater distance than six miles. The length of time on the road should not exceed an hour.

Summary of the Advantages of Consolidation.

Consolidation will insure:

1. Larger area and greater wealth of district, guaranteeing the school a sound financial basis.
2. Better buildings and permanent improvements.
3. Better roads.
4. Better equipment and more of it.
5. Usable libraries.
6. A smaller number of teachers, each especially prepared for his particular work.
7. Longer terms of school.
8. Pupils more properly graded and classified.
9. Longer class periods and better results in the same length of term.
10. More thorough work in the upper grades.

11. That pupils will remain in school from two to four years longer.
12. Opportunity for country children to remain at home and secure training in the higher branches.
13. Advantages of special subjects, such as music, drawing, and agriculture.
14. A larger number of pupils in regular attendance, larger classes, and accordingly greater interest.
15. More attractive and beneficial school life, because of larger associations, which extend a child's experience, teach him better manners, and broaden him generally.
16. Fewer pupils leaving school before completing the eight primary grades.
17. That a greater number of those who finish the eighth grade will go to high school.
18. A great saving to parents in the cost of educating their children when the high school subjects are taught.
19. Greater contentment because good schools are near.
20. Greater physical comforts and better moral oversight of children where transportation is provided.
21. Better health of the children because of better hygienic conditions.
22. More regular attendance and better discipline.
23. Elimination of petty neighborhood jealousies which interfere with work in smaller schools.
24. Practical elimination of tardiness and truancy.
25. Close supervision of the work by the Principal.
26. Means of professional improvement for teachers, through association with other teachers.
27. Better school officers because of larger number from which to select.
28. A central rallying point for community interests.
29. A reduced cost of schooling per pupil for each day attended.
30. Increased land values.
31. A good class of permanent rural citizens who would otherwise move to town to educate their children.
32. A school as efficient for the farming communities as the city school is for the city.
33. A higher standard of education for the community.
34. A stimulation for other progressive movements in the community.
35. Same opportunity for the poor as for the rich.
36. Better supervision by county superintendents.

Arguments For Consolidation.

It is not our purpose to enlarge upon each one of the thirty-six advantages of consolidation just stated, but to present, as clearly as we can, the large gains that would come to our rural schools from the adoption of consolidation. We may boast as we will of our present rural school system, but it is far from satisfactory—and for three chief reasons: First, its tendency is to secure teachers not fitted by age, experience, or training to perform the tremendously difficult and important task of training and teaching children; second, it renders impossible the proper grading of the schools, without which even the good teacher cannot succeed; and third, it does not provide for any schooling above the eighth grade, and therefore puts the farmer who naturally desires more education for his children to the necessity of sending them to town at

great expense—at a time too, when they should not be away from home—or of moving to town with his family.

As to the teacher: A majority of the teachers in the rural schools are young women from seventeen to twenty-one years of age. It is perhaps safe to say that a majority of these are without normal school training. Many of them are only eighth grade graduates who have prepared themselves for certificates by attendance upon the county institutes. There are, of course, many cases where excellent teachers are secured for the country schools. But as a rule, under present conditions, the good teacher will not take a country school if she can get any other—and she generally can. Now the strength of the school depends almost absolutely upon the strength of the teacher, and it is unfortunate, to say the least, that the rural schools under the present system, secure the less capable teachers. It must be apparent that the consolidated school, which would add greatly to the interest of the work, brings the companionship of other teachers and the guidance of a capable principal, releases the country teacher from the nightmare of an ungraded school, and inevitably results in raising the standard of efficiency among the teachers of the rural schools.

As to grading: Under the present system it is no unusual thing for the teacher in the rural school to hear from twenty-five to thirty classes a day. This gives from ten to twelve minutes to a recitation, which is wholly inadequate. Suppose three districts were consolidated, and only the same work were covered. There would still be twenty-five or thirty recitations, but it would be distributed among three teachers, and ample time would be available for each recitation. The teacher, instead of being forced to teach everything, whether she is fitted for it or not, could be assigned in a measure, at least, to the work or grade for which she is specially fitted. Moreover, she would have the very great advantage of the supervision and direction of an experienced and capable principal—for it is certain that the principalship of these schools would attract such men. The possibility of grade work is one of the very greatest advantages to be derived from consolidation.

As to advanced work: Work above the eighth grade, or "common school," would be entirely at the option of the consolidated district. If only this work were given it would be better given, and more pupils would take it. But one of the objects of consolidation is to provide higher schooling for country children without sending them or taking them away from home; and in most cases, therefore, there will be a demand for additional grades. These should be added as they are needed, and not at the expenses of thoroughness in the lower grades. The rural high school course, while following in some respects the high school courses of the cities, should differ from these in some essential particulars. It should harmonize with country life, leading to it instead of away from it. While not neglecting literary training, it should emphasize the natural sciences,

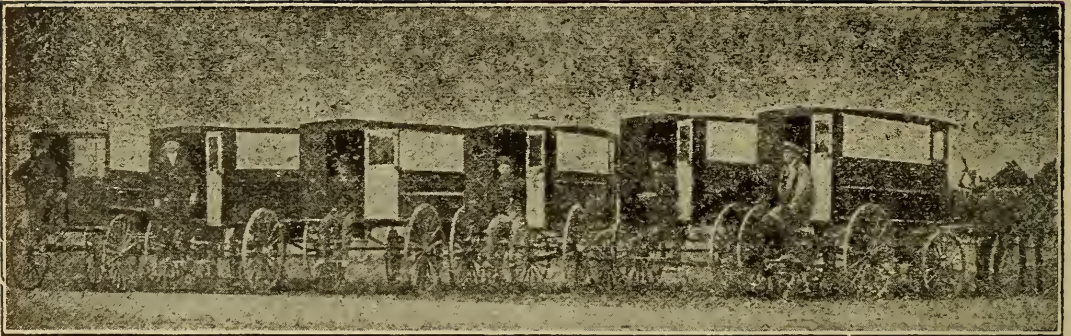
and should be strong in agriculture, manual training, and domestic economy. Such a course will be prepared and published in due time by this Board.

A Neighborhood Center.

The consolidated school should be the natural gathering place for the social, intellectual, and industrial life of the neighborhood. An assembly room, or at least an arrangement of sliding partitions which would provide as assembly room, should be a feature of the consolidated school house. Here could be held lyceum courses, literary and agricultural society meetings, farmers' institutes, and entertainments of various sorts. Indeed, the fact that such a place was available would encourage activity in all these directions, and would thus add greatly to the attractiveness of country life. This advantage of consolidation is not quite so obvious as some of the others that have been mentioned, but it is certainly worthy of careful consideration. In direct connection with it, is the matter of "school spirit." It must be perfectly evident that there will be more enthusiasm for school when the attendance is greater, the classes larger, and the spirit of emulation both in study and in sports more keen. One of the very first effects of consolidation, as shown in the experience of our own state and other states, is to hold the boys and girls in school—simply because school is more interesting.

A Farmers' Movement.

About sixty per cent. of the people of Oklahoma live in the country. The prosperity and happiness of this great rural population, as well as its contribution to the general upbuilding of the state, depend chiefly upon two things: success in agricultural pursuits, and the standard of excellence maintained in the rural schools. It is a fact that the work of improving our rural schools has not kept pace with the progress toward better methods and better results in farming. It is doubtful if the country schools are as good as they once were, since there was a time when men and women of mature years could be secured to teach them. Many plans have been proposed to try to make the isolated rural schools meet the requirements of modern times, and practically all who have given attention to the matter, and have kept watch upon the various experiments tried, are agreed that the plan of uniting small districts into larger and more adequate school units has proven the most effective. It ought to be a farmers' movement. Its strongest feature is its certainty of making farm life more attractive and successful. It need hardly be said that children who are sent to town for their schooling are almost inevitably educated away from country life. The problems they solve, the compositions they write, the influences they encounter, all tend to the same end. This is not to say that country boys and girls should be deliberately educated away from the city. Much of the best manhood and woman-



WAITING FOR DISMISSAL.



READY FOR THE RIDE.

hood of the cities comes from the country, and always will. But the tendency to drift to the town is already over-strong, and the real attractiveness and opportunity of country life should have the utmost chance to assert itself. The boys and girls of the country are entitled to the pleasures and refining influences of music, literature, and other forms of culture just as much as the city's boys and girls. The consolidated rural school will bring these things to the country children, so that they may be enjoyed by all, whereas under the present system these advantages are reserved too largely to those who leave the country and go into the towns to finish their schooling.

Cost.

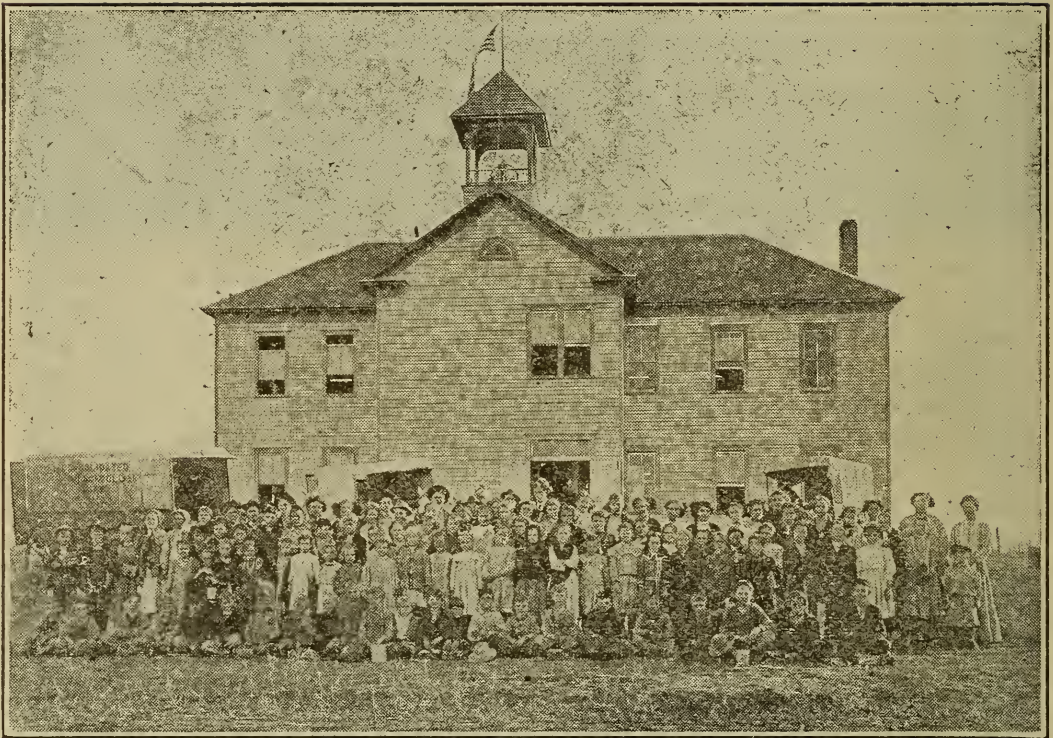
The cost of the new system, as compared with the old, is the most difficult problem to deal with when the question of consolidation is broached. There are two ways of looking at it: the actual cost of maintaining the consolidated school, as compared with the actual cost of maintaining the schools which have been consolidated; and the cost of schooling for each pupil per day's attendance under consolidation, compared with the similar cost under the old system. We shall hereafter refer to this last as the per capita cost.

Briefly, it may be said that in Oklahoma experience has shown that the actual cost under consolidation is somewhat greater than under the old system, and that the per capita cost is materially less. In some parts of the United States it has been found that even the actual cost under consolidation is somewhat less; but this occurs where the rural schools have a very small enrollment and where the number of teachers may be reduced under consolidation. In Oklahoma the enrollment in the rural schools is relatively large, and it is impossible under consolidation materially to reduce the number of teachers, especially since consolidation invariably results in stimulating and enlarging the attendance. We believe the following is a conservative statement of the cost of maintaining a consolidated school of four rooms, including transportation of pupils. It is made on a basis of one hundred and fifty pupils.

Per Month.

One principal.....	\$ 75.00
Three teachers.....	150.00
Five wagons.....	175.00
One janitor.....	25.00
Fuel and incidentals.....	20.00
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Cost per month.....	445.00
For seven months.....	3,115.00
Less per cap. fund from state.....	225.00
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	\$2,890.00

This, counting the interest on the net investment of the district, would represent approximately a 5 mill levy on a valuation of \$600,000, or a 10 mill levy on \$300,000.



QUAY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL--PAWNEE COUNTY

Experience in Oklahoma.

We have instituted a searching inquiry into the consolidated schools of Oklahoma, directing our inquiries to the superintendents of the counties and to the principals of the consolidated schools. Our questions covered not only the matter of cost, but the subjects of enrollment, attendance, transportation, efficiency, and the sentiment of the community toward the new system. With reference to the last named point, it may be said, in passing, that every report unequivocally asserted that the community would be unwilling to return to the old system. From many in our hands we select a few representative instances.

Kay County.

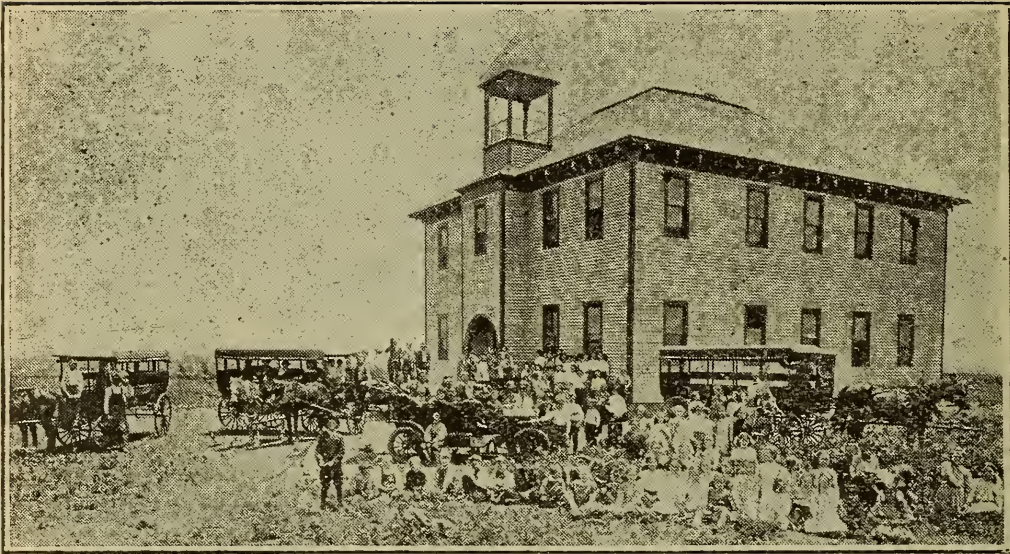
In Kay County, districts 49, 50, and 51 were consolidated. The total cost of maintaining schools in these three districts before consolidation was as follows: \$3,432.94 for the year 1907, \$2,554.42 for 1908, and \$2,391.20 for 1909. The total cost of maintaining the consolidated school was \$2,913.00 for 1910 and \$2,651.09 for 1911. That is, the average cost for three years was \$2,426.18, for two years under consolidation, \$2,782.05. This shows an average of \$355.87 more each year to maintain the consolidated school. These figures included the cost of running four wagons in 1910 and five in 1911. As to the per capita cost, the report shows that the average cost of maintaining school for three years before consolidation was 17 1-3 cents for each pupil for each day in attendance. The average cost for the two years under consolidation was 12 cents for each pupil for each day in attendance. These figures plainly show that when the increase in length of term and in attendance is considered, the people get more for their money under consolidation than under the old system.

Quay Consolidated School.

This is the oldest consolidated school in the state—established in 1903. Under date of July 10, 1911, the Principal, Mr. J. T. Stripling, gives the following figures as to cost per month for an eight months' school, and attendance for the year past:

Teachers' salaries.....	\$ 190.00
Three wagons.....	105.00
Janitor.....	10.00
Incidentals.....	12.50
Total per month.....	\$ 317.50
Total for eight months.....	2,540.00

This, it will be seen, falls considerably below our estimate on a previous page for a four-room school. There was an average attendance of 110 pupils, an average enrollment of 120. The cost of the wagons was \$100 each, and the service is satisfactory. Mr.



CANUTE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
WASHITA COUNTY

Stripling reports the sentiment of the community as "very favorable" to the plan.

Yale Consolidated School.

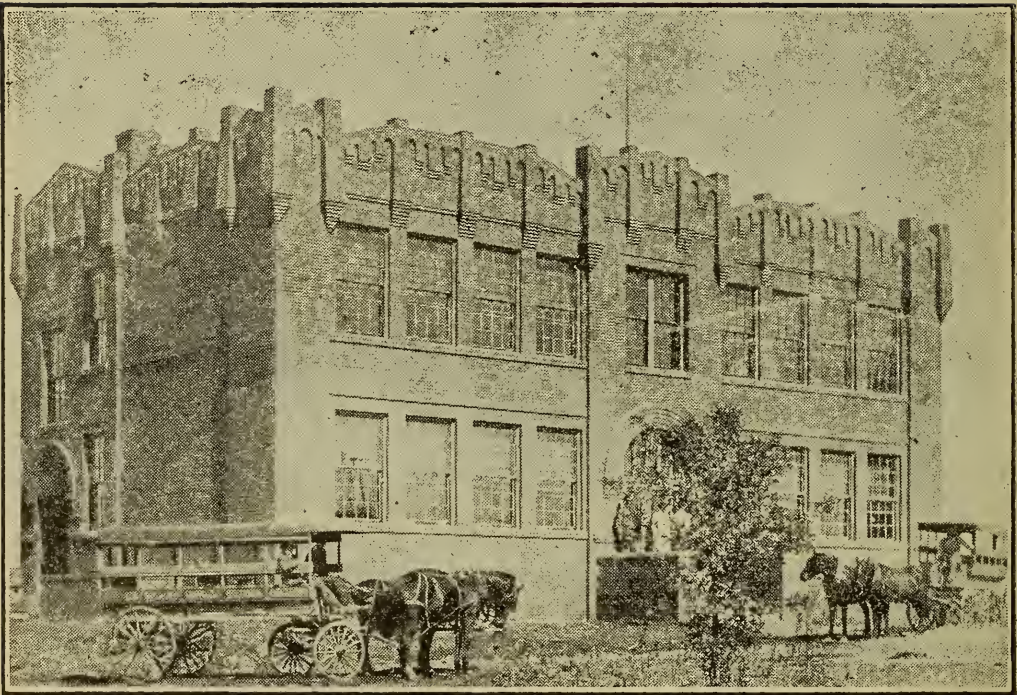
This school was established in 1906. The town of Yale has more than doubled in population during that time, and eight teachers are employed where but three were employed in the beginning, so it is impracticable to give the comparative actual cost. But the report shows that the per capita cost before consolidation was \$2.30 per month, and at the present time it is \$1.70. The district owns three wagons costing \$120.00 each, and the drivers receive \$35.00 a month each. Of this feature the Principal, Mr. F. H. Reed, writes, "It is as satisfactory as any department in the school." He also adds: "The new system is entirely satisfactory. There is none to prefer the old system. All are proud of our school." The Yale school gives two years of high school work, and is accredited by the A. & M. College.

Canute Consolidated School.

This school, in Washita county, was opened in November, 1909. The Principal, Mr. J. G. Springer, sends us the following interesting items, under date of July 8, 1911. "The district owns four vans or wagons, each costing \$172.00. Men are employed to drive these wagons for the school term, the district paying \$42.57 a month to each man. As to the service of these wagons, I will say that it could hardly be better. There has been no trouble of any kind. The wagons are always on time. They have never been late, not once since our school was established. This system entirely cuts out tardiness and absence. Our school received one-third of all the perfect attendance certificates of the whole county. We enrolled 212 the first year, and 229 last year. The consolidated district levied an eight mill tax the first year and had an eight months' school. Last year we levied seven mills and had a nine months' school. We shall have nine months this year. There is not a man in the district who opposes the plan. One man was not suited the first year, and got out of the district. Last year he sent his children to a school of two teachers, but he has made arrangements to send to our school, pay tuition of \$1.50 per month, and deliver his own children." T. H. Hubbard, county superintendent of Washita county, writes regarding this same school, under date of July 5th, 1911, "The school has given great satisfaction to the people of the district." He adds that two other consolidated schools have just been established in Washita county, one at the village of Cowden, and the other at Gill.

Wakita Consolidated School.

It is the purpose of this bulletin to give the facts, whether favorable or unfavorable to consolidation in any particular. The cost of



HITCHCOCK CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL—BLAINE COUNTY.

this particular school seems to be slightly greater, even on a per capita basis, than that of the separate districts. Following are the figures covering cost and other data, furnished by the superintendent of Grant county, under date of July 11th:

Before Consolidation	After Consolidation
Average cost per pupil per day....	103..... 113
Average enrollment.....	133..... 175
Average daily attendance.....	99½..... 142
Number tardinesses.....	441..... 21
Neither tardy nor absent.....	4..... 23
Common school graduates.....	1..... 8

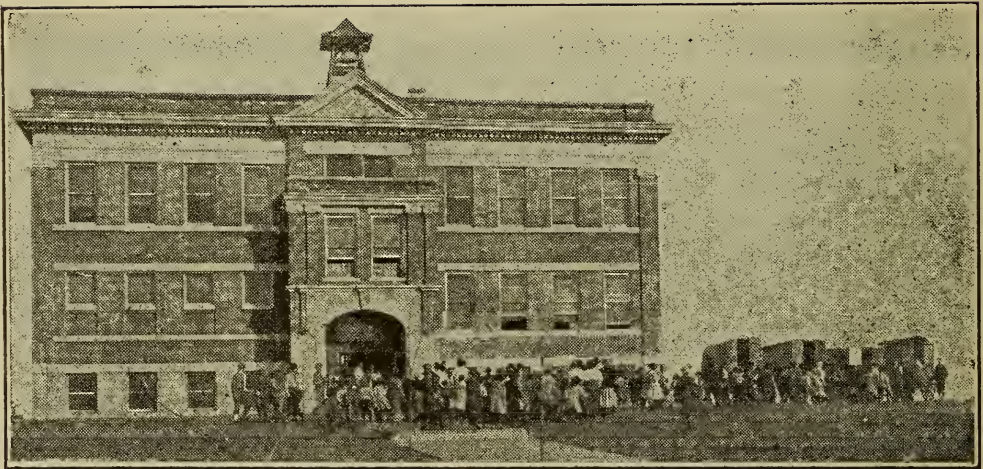
Otherwise than as to cost, this school makes a splendid showing. Six wagons are employed for transportation, and it is interesting to note that these wagons are "home-made"—that is, the driver furnishes the "running gears," and covered beds are made by local workmen for \$55 each. The superintendent writes: "This consolidated district is strictly rural, being formed from four ordinary country districts. It is seven miles from town and has no railroad running through it to help it out on valuation. The people are generally well pleased with the school. The only real objection advanced is that a few people who live in the outskirts of the district have to be hauled too far, especially in mid-winter. The district is about six miles by six miles. Without a doubt the school is a success." The entire cost of maintaining this school for seven months last year was \$3,368.80.

Garfield County.

The following is an extract from a letter from County Superintendent George Rainey, under date of July 6th, 1911. It shows a truly remarkable interest in consolidation in Garfield county. "Since April 1, 1911, forty-five school districts have voted on the question and thirty have voted affirmatively. We have organized two consolidated schools this summer. In many cases where four districts sought to consolidate, three voted in its favor, while the fourth returned a small majority against it, thus killing the whole proposition and permitting a small minority to rule. We have one consolidated school that has been in operation for two years, and no objection is raised by any patron."

The Hitchcock Consolidated School.

This is a Blaine county school, which has had one year of very successful operation. Two districts joined with the village of Hitchcock. Two vans are used costing \$160 each. One contract for transportation was taken at \$40.00 per month, and the other at \$44.00. Four teachers are employed, the principal at \$100 per month, one primary teacher at \$55, two intermediate teachers at \$50 each. The janitor costs \$40, and fuel \$33. per month. Before



COPAN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
WASHINGTON COUNTY

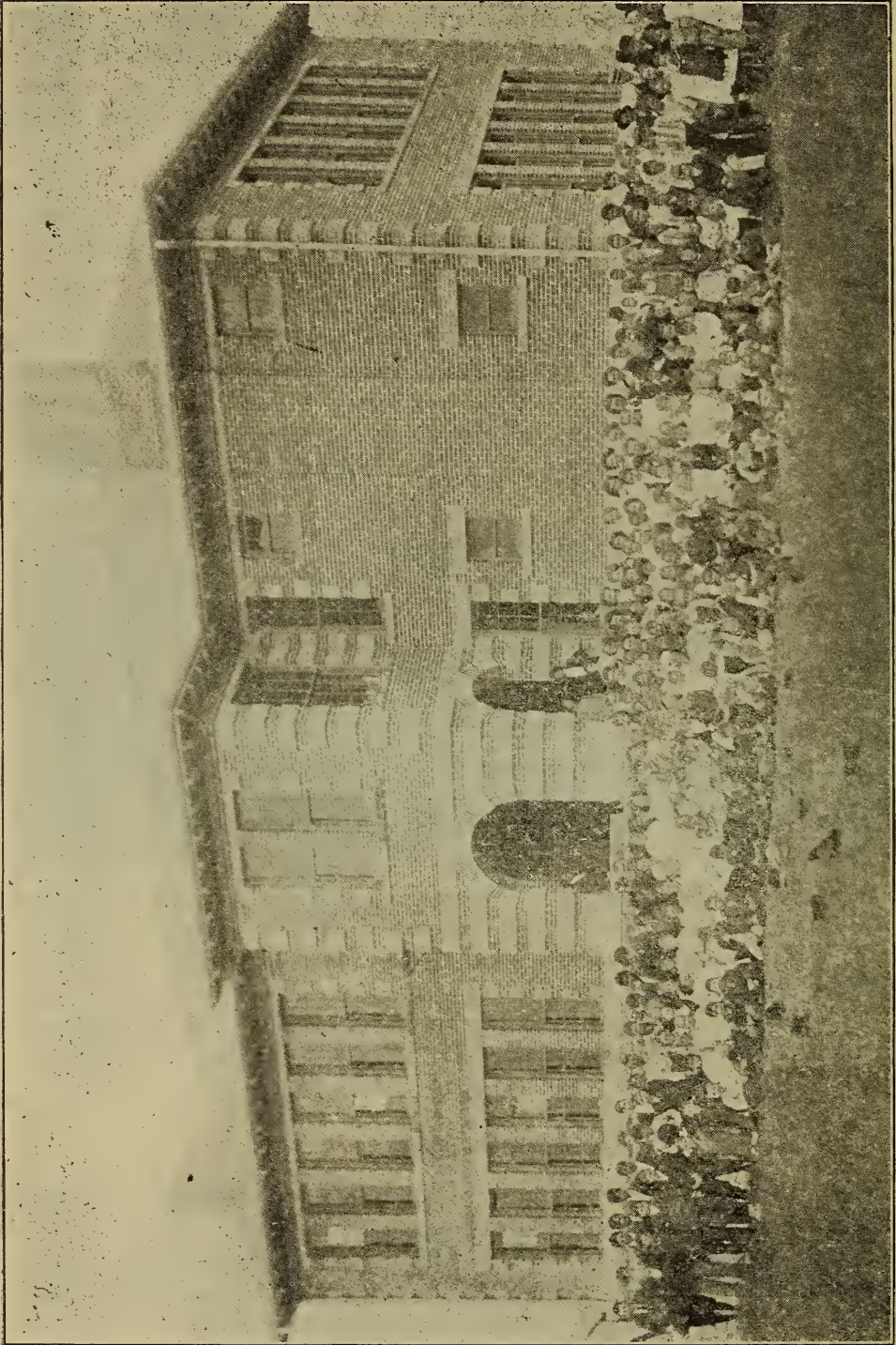
consolidation, the cost per pupil per month was \$5; after consolidation, less than \$4,—and this includes one year of high school. The wagons were not tardy a single time. The attendance was fifty per cent. better than under the old system. Mr. D. A. Drake, of Hitchcock, who furnishes these facts, adds: "Not a single patron of the school is complaining. We hear nothing but praises for our school. All unite in saying that the children learned more in this single term than they could learn in two or three terms of the old kind of country schools. No pupil has been compelled to walk more than one mile and but very few that far. We expect to have two or three more districts unite with us this season. If any one doubts the feasibility of graded schools for rural districts, let him come to Hitchcock and investigate. Ask the farmers who are patrons of this school; not a single one of them would change back to the old order of things. The children are delighted with the nice morning and evening rides. Children who formerly were in the habit of playing hookey, or of staying home on one pretext or another and who had to be hired or forced to go to school, have been anxious to go since they can ride."

Copan School.

This school is in Washington county, and was established after statehood. The district was originally laid out to contain about twenty-eight square miles, with Copan in the center. We quote the following from the report of the Principal, W. J. Robinson: "We have 250 pupils enrolled and the per cent. of attendance for the past two years is about ninety-five. Tardiness of the country children has been entirely eliminated. We find that eighty-five per cent. of the absence and all of the tardiness is by the town children. The drivers have never been tardy in two years. Pupils are more interested in their work. There is a certain school and class spirit developed which cannot be developed in a country school. We have literary societies, base ball teams, school yells, and colors, all of which tend to keep the children interested in the school work. Pupils can do better work, because they receive better instruction. Instead of having all of the grades from one to eight, the teachers each have one or possibly two grades to handle."

Rogers County.

In this county the districts are not, properly speaking, "consolidated" schools. They were made large—as large as three or four ordinary districts—to start with. County Superintendent B. H. Hester, under date of July 22, writes a long and interesting letter, from which we have space to quote only the following: "You ask for supplemental facts touching the operation of the system in my county, either favorable or unfavorable, which have come within my observation. I may say that my observation during the handling of this system has taught me that the system is a success



INOLA CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL—ROGERS COUNTY.

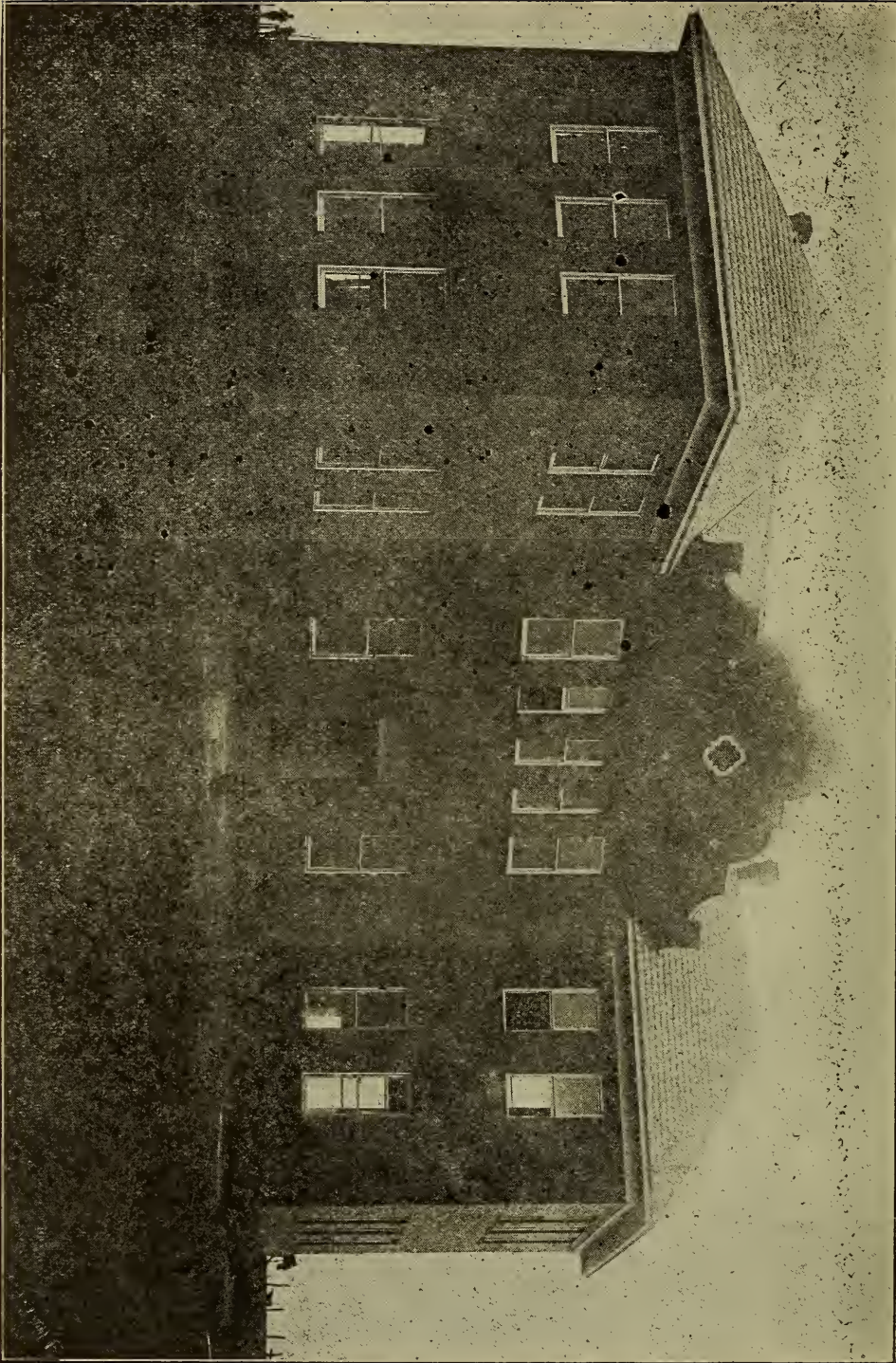
only where it is desired by a large majority of the patrons. A community can get a consolidated school before it needs it, or rather before it is ready for it. This certainly would have been the case in many of the districts in this county, had I not gone into these districts dozens of times and spent time and money, gray matter and vitality, educating the masses up to the idea. . . . I find that the little cost added in maintaining these schools, and even the transportation system, do not strike the people as unfavorably as they did. At the annual meeting in this county, eight districts that had never transported children voted for transportation; and only yesterday I received a petition, very unexpectedly, adding district 37 to district 38, doing away entirely with district 37. Twenty-seven patrons out of thirty-nine in the district signed the petition, and not one to whom the petition was presented refused to sign it. There are no valid objections to the system, and I find that as the more intelligent class of people come in, and those already in the district become educated, the system is praised instead of being adversely criticised. In district 22 I forced, by sledge-hammer blows, the transportation system the first year of statehood; and for two years I had a hard fight to get an additional wagon. Yet last year, without my taking any hand in the matter, the district added another wagon. They would not hear of having the system changed."

Consolidation in Other States.

It has been remarked that many other states are trying the consolidation plan. In Massachusetts, Maine, Minnesota, Ohio, Virginia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Vermont, West Virginia, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, Washington, South Dakota, Arkansas, California, Idaho, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon and North Carolina the plan is in operation to a greater or less extent. In Missouri, the law providing for consolidation has resulted in but few consolidated schools owing to the absence of a provision for the transportation of pupils. Indiana is the leader in the movement, the statistics of 1908 showing 1,611 small schools abandoned; 386 consolidated schools established; 19,109 pupils transported at an average daily cost of \$2,304.50, or 12 cents each per day; 1,116 wagons carrying school children, running at a cost of \$2.07 a day for each wagon.

It is impossible, and it would not be desirable, to quote in detail the experience of these states. Instead of doing this, we shall quote from the latest reports some data concerning a few consolidated schools in Nebraska and Kansas—states dealing with conditions very similar to those existing in Oklahoma. These extracts are taken from the very valuable bulletin, "Consolidation of Rural Schools," issued by the Department of Public Instruction of Nebraska, 1910.

SPRINGER CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL — CARTER COUNTY



The Sholes School, Nebraska.

This is a district formed by the consolidation of districts 30, 67, and 76, in Wayne county, Nebraska.

"The school is housed in a \$6,000 two-and-a-half story frame building, containing four recitation rooms, one laboratory, furnace room, and small shelved rooms for library and text-books. The entire building is heated with a hot air blast furnace, and has a perfect system of ventilation.

"The attendance has increased greatly. When a pupil in a rural school is doing irregular, fragmentary work in a class by himself, it is easy to remain absent for the most trivial excuse. In the large class, which progresses in orderly sequence from day to day, the pupil can be made to feel a distinct loss for every day's absence; hence he guards against absence.

"The big boys and girls also remain in school. The attraction of numbers, the incentive of competition, the social features of the school, the singing and literary exercises, the games, the pleasant, well-ventilated school rooms, the library, the superior teachers and the love of learning, all combine to hold them in school.

"Under this system the farm becomes the ideal place to bring up children, enabling them to obtain the advantages enjoyed by our centers of population, and yet to spend their evenings and holiday time in the country, 'under the constant, wholesome and tender care of father and mother as they gather around the fireside after supper, and in contact with nature and plenty of work, instead of idly loafing about town.'

"The State of Nebraska should be proud of what the farmers in three districts surrounding Sholes have done. It has been done by country people of moderate circumstances without a cent donated by outsiders. What this community has done other communities in Nebraska can do.

"Following are some quotations collected from parents of the Sholes district:

"'The system is indeed a success. My children never learned as they are learning now, and they have a greater interest in school than ever before.' 'Our school compares very favorably with any town school in work done.' (From a man who has had children in school in different towns where he has lived.) One mother who has sent her children to the same teacher in the country school who has charge of the intermediate room says: 'My children learn fully twice as fast now under the same teacher as they did before.' One farmer says: 'I can't keep my children home any more. They like the association with others of the same age and same degree of advancement.' Another farmer says: 'There is simply nothing like it. It's the only system. The little ones can go more regularly in winter because the older boys take them even on stormy days.' Another says: 'Nothing can be said too strongly in favor of it for me.' From one and all comes, 'They learn faster and are more contented and interested in the work.' They like it better all the time; farmers hired men to husk corn last winter that their boys might stay in school. Was that very often done before?"

The Burns School, Marion County, Kansas.

The following extracts are from a report of the consolidated school at Burns, Marion County, Kansas, made by C. C. Starr, assistant state superintendent, after a personal visit. We regret very much that we cannot publish this report in full.

"The Burns school was consolidated in 1904. The district was originally formed out of five separate school districts. In 1906 an additional district made application for admission to the consolidated district and it was admitted, so that now the consolidated district consists of what were originally six separate school districts, and the area comprised is forty-three square

miles, or considerably more than a congressional township. While the last district that joined the consolidated district is farther from the central school than is ordinarily advised for such districts, that district estimated that the advantages of the consolidated school would be superior to the disadvantages of the long distance to school. Experience has demonstrated the truth of this.

"After extensive inquiry, no person could be found in the district who would be willing to go back to the old system of separate small schools. There is a general belief that the schools are far better than under the old plan, and that the community, through consolidation, has taken a long step forward educationally.

"J. S. Crawford, who has been treasurer of the consolidated school district since its organization, and who before consolidation was a teacher in the Burns school, gave the following information:

"Most of the drivers of the wagons are trustworthy young men attending the high school. On the whole they prove to be the most satisfactory drivers. One wagon is driven very satisfactorily by a woman. The wagons are owned by the district and can be entirely closed. The drivers contract to keep the wagons in repair. The cost of the wagons was \$130 each. There are plenty of applications by persons desiring to secure an appointment as driver. During the day the teams are kept in the sheds that have been erected on the school-grounds.'

"In practice the pupils see the wagons coming and are ready to enter as soon as the wagons arrive. No difficulty has been experienced on account of waiting for pupils who are not ready. There is no demand for a mode of transportation other than the one now in use.'

"Fewer, on account of sickness, are absent from the country than from the town. In case of sickness the pupil is taken to the doctor, and if advisable, the pupil is driven home in a closed carriage at the expense of the district.'

"All the patrons of the district are satisfied with the consolidated school. The schools are now 100 per cent. better than they were before consolidation.'

"The increase in the value of real estate throughout the consolidated district on account of the consolidated schools is at least five dollars per acre. The first question asked by the people wanting to buy land in the neighborhood is whether the land is inside consolidated districts. I have known a number of men having refused to purchase land because it is located outside of the consolidated district.'"

Ohio and North Carolina.

Since the preparation of this bulletin was commenced, it was reported to us that consolidation was not proving altogether successful in Ohio and North Carolina. In order to satisfy ourselves as to this report we addressed letters to the State Superintendents of these states, advising them of these rumors, and asking for a statement of the facts. The following replies were received, the first from the State Commissioner of Common Schools, of Ohio, the second from the Superintendent of Public Instruction, of North Carolina.

Columbus, Ohio, July 10, 1911.

Hon. A. C. Scott,
Oklahoma City, Okla.

My dear Sir:

Wherever schools have been properly consolidated in Ohio and centralized fully, there has been no retrogression; but if started in a haphazard, half-hearted way, it often fails as other things do which are done in a poor

manner. Let me repeat that properly consolidated and centralized schools in Ohio are a success and are multiplying every year. We have now about two hundred centralized schools in Ohio and more are being formed.

Very respectfully,
F. W. MILLER, Commissioner.

Raleigh, N. C., July 10, 1911.

Mr. A. C. Scott,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Dear Sir:

Your letter is the first suggestion I have had of the failure of the plan of consolidation of schools in this State. Our records show that hundreds and hundreds of districts have been consolidated, and that fact, together with the assurance that the progress of consolidation is still going on, although slowly, in this State, will certainly counteract any statement to the contrary. I should also like to say that the last General Assembly, in session in February of this year, provided for the transportation of pupils at public expense in consolidated districts. We have one man connected with this office now who has been giving a great deal of time to the study of consolidation of schools and the transportation of pupils in this and other States, and we have ready now for the printer a bulletin on this subject prepared by him. We are printing this bulletin for the benefit of our superintendents and county board of education, with the hope that still greater interest will be established in consolidation and transportation. In two or three instances in this State transportation at public expense has already been undertaken. Within a few miles of the capital, possibly fifteen or twenty, we have a twelve thousand dollar brick building in a consolidated district, right in the country. The report of the Inspector of Public High Schools, which I am sending under separate cover, will show you pictures of the buildings in some of our consolidated school districts. Most of the public high schools are in consolidated districts.

Very truly yours,
J. Y. JOYNER,
Superintendent Public Instruction.

How to Consolidate.

Meetings to vote on the question of consolidation may be called by the district clerk; or they may be called by the district board of each district concerned, upon written application of one-third of the voters of the respective districts. We recommend the latter plan. We also recommend that the county superintendent be first consulted and his co-operation obtained. At least ten days' notice must be given of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. The notices must be signed by the district clerk and posted in five public places in the district, one of which shall be on the outer door of the school house. The notices in each district must state what districts it is proposed to consolidate. The clerk must make a record of the order of the board calling the meeting. This record should be signed by the director and clerk. A majority of all votes cast in the proposition in each district is necessary to secure consolidation. Women are entitled to vote.

Subsequent Proceedings.

If the proposition for consolidation carries in all the districts,

the county superintendent will, upon notification of the result, make an order disorganizing the districts and will call a general meeting for the purpose of organizing the consolidated district. In the new organization, if more than two districts unite, not more than one member of the new board can be chosen from any one of the old districts.

Transportation.

The old law has the following provision with reference to consolidation: "It shall be the duty of the District Board (of consolidated schools) to provide transportation to and from school for all pupils living one and one-half miles or more therefrom, in suitable vehicles of ample size, with comfortable seats, arranged to conform to the sizes of the pupils to be carried, with an adjustable cover for the comfort and protection of the pupils, drawn by stout, gentle teams and driven by persons of good moral character, who shall have control of said pupils during their transportation." The last legislature amended this law as follows: "Provided, however, that when a majority of the voters voting at a special meeting called by proper notices as provided by law shall vote to do away with the transportation by the district, then transportation shall not be mandatory." As will be shown later, however, if transportation is discontinued, no state aid will be available for such consolidated district.

Indebtedness of Disorganized District.

If any disorganized district has a bonded indebtedness, the identity of such district is maintained for the purpose of liquidating this indebtedness, and the county commissioners levy annually a tax on the territory of such disorganized district to meet the obligation when due. The property of a disorganized district is to be sold, and the proceeds go first to the payment of warrant or floating indebtedness, and shall then apply on its bonded indebtedness; and any residue shall go to the consolidated district.

State Aid.

The last legislature provided state aid, first, for the union graded or consolidated schools already established, and second for district schools not less than twenty-five square miles in area which *shall* be established. In the first case proof must be made that a union graded or consolidated school district has been formed for a term of not less than six scholastic months, and has employed at least three teachers, and has had an actual attendance during said term of not fewer than one hundred and thirty scholastic pupils residing within the boundary of said district, and that transportation has been furnished as provided by law, and that a suitable building of not fewer than three rooms has been constructed; and this proof must be approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In the second case the same proof must be made ex-

cept that the number of pupils need not be shown; and in addition it must be shown that the district is not less than twenty-five square miles in area. When these facts are shown, the district is entitled to have a warrant drawn by the State Auditor upon the State Treasurer for a sum not to exceed one-half of the cost of the building, and in no case to exceed \$2,500. It is further provided that the State Board of Education "may decrease this amount if in its judgment the amount is greater than a fair proportion belonging to one district." This law is printed in full as an appendix to this bulletin.

The Fund, and the Available Amounts.

The particular fund from which these sums are to be paid comes from the rentals and the sale (authorized by the last legislature) of sections 33, together with certain indemnity lands, in (old) Greer County. We are authorized by the State School Land Department to say that these lands will be placed on sale as conditions seem favorable to securing the best returns. It should be borne in mind, however, that the sales will be made on the deferred payment basis of the other public lands.

The law provides that the State Board of Education, in apportioning said funds, "shall make such rules and regulations as shall ultimately result in a fair and equitable distribution of said fund to the different counties of the state, in proportion, as nearly as may be possible, to the scholastic population outside of cities of the first class." It might very plausibly be urged that those districts which have the enterprise and foresight to consolidate at an early date, or which have already consolidated, should be paid in full, leaving the more backward ones to take their chances with future legislation. But this is not in accordance with either the letter or the spirit of the law. The Board has determined upon the following "rules and regulations" as strictly carrying out the terms of the law.

(1) The total amount of the fund shall be ascertained, including the value of sections 33, the amount of money now on hand from rentals of said sections 33 and of indemnity lands taken in lieu thereof, and the amount on hand from sales of certain of said indemnity lands.

(2) The amount of said total sum due to each person of school age in the state outside of cities of the first class shall be ascertained by dividing said total sum by the number of persons representing the school population outside of cities of the first class.

(3) The amount of said total sum due to each county shall be ascertained by multiplying the scholastic population of each county, outside of cities of the first class, by the per capita amount as ascertained in (2).

(4) From the amount of funds at any time on hand from either rentals or sales of lands in question, consolidated districts entitled under the law to state aid shall be paid the amount found to be due them, in order of the filing of their applications. The Board shall determine said amount, taking into account all the circumstances affecting both the county and the district.

(5) Amounts due to counties and not paid out are subject to readjustment at reasonable intervals in accordance with the fluctuations of the rural school population.

A careful estimate of the sum shows that it amounts to \$488,-480.87. Of this amount there is on hand \$57,947.64. From the method above indicated it is found that the amount set opposite the name of each county in the subjoined table will be due to said county, and will be paid to consolidated districts within said county under Rule (4).

Name of County	Amt. Due County	Name of County	Amt. Due County
Adair	\$ 3,943.50	LeFlore	11,127.60
Alfalfa	6,278.80	Lincoln	14,152.60
Atoka	5,084.20	Logan	7,104.90
Beaver	5,097.40	Love	4,175.60
Beckham	6,233.70	Major	5,913.60
Blaine	6,402.00	Marshall	4,470.40
Bryan	8,934.20	Mayes	4,803.10
Caddo	10,695.30	Murray	4,518.80
Canadian	5,698.00	Muskogee	9,332.40
Carter	6,914.60	McClain	5,157.90
Cherokee	5,121.60	McCurtain	6,905.80
Choctaw	6,573.60	McIntosh	7,712.10
Craig	4,683.80	Noble	4,247.10
Cimarron	1,523.50	Nowata	3,191.10
Cleveland	5,662.80	Okfuskee	7,881.50
Coal	4,786.10	Oklahoma	4,296.20
Comanche	11,788.70	Okmulgee	6,922.20
Creek	6,271.10	Osage	6,040.10
Custer	7,528.40	Ottawa	4,815.80
Delaware	4,298.80	Pawnee	6,462.50
Dewey	5,965.30	Payne	7,530.60
Ellis	5,468.10	Pittsburg	11,239.80
Garfield	6,854.10	Pontotoc	7,564.70
Garvin	8,985.90	Pottawatomie	12,005.40
Grady	7,263.30	Pushmataha	3,265.90
Grant	7,075.20	Roger Mills	5,222.80
Greer	4,675.00	Rogers	5,901.50
Harmon	4,359.30	Seminole	6,900.30
Harper	2,803.90	Sequoyah	9,006.80
Haskell	6,638.50	Stephens	8,195.00
Hughes	8,325.90	Texas	5,240.40
Jackson	7,081.00	Tillman	8,465.60
Jefferson	5,209.60	Tulsa	5,154.60
Johnson	6,967.40	Wagoner	6,475.70
Kay	8,275.30	Washington	3,081.10
Kingfisher	6,018.10	Washita	10,241.00
Kiowa	8,406.20	Woods	5,363.00
Latimer	3,824.70	Woodward	4,859.80

APPENDIX.

The State Aid Law.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Oklahoma.

Section 1. All the lands and funds that have heretofore been or may hereafter be derived from the sale thereof, embraced in Section 33 according to the United States survey, located in Greer county, as the county existed prior to November 16th, 1907, together with all lands selected in lieu there-

of, and the proceeds of all rentals, interests and sales accrued, or that may accrue therefrom shall be set aside and credited to a fund which is hereby created, to be known as the "Union Graded or Consolidated School District Fund," the same to be used only to assist in constructing or paying for school buildings for consolidated school districts, that have been or may hereafter be constructed under existing laws pertaining to consolidated school districts.

Section 2. The Commissioners of the Land Office are authorized and directed to sell and convey the lands described and set aside in Section 1 of this Act; same to be sold under the provisions, limitations, exceptions, rules, and regulations of lands sold under amended Senate Bill No .1, approved March 2nd, 1909, the same being Article 2 of Chapter 28 of the Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1909, or as may be hereafter provided by law.

Section 3. Such funds as have now accrued by virtue of rentals, and such as may hereafter accrue by virtue of rentals, and the proceeds of sale and interest thereon, prior to January 1st, 1913, are hereby appropriated and placed at the disposal of the State Board of Education, subject to the conditions and limitations contained in this act.

Section 4. The State Board of Education in apportioning said fund shall make such rules and regulations as shall ultimately result in a fair and equitable distribution of said fund to the different counties of the State, in proportion, as nearly as may be possible, to the scholastic population outside of cities of the first class.

Section 5. In any union graded or consolidated school district that has been formed for a term of not less than six scholastic months, and has employed at least three teachers, and has an actual attendance during the said term of not fewer than one hundred thirty scholastic pupils residing within the boundary of said district, (the district having furnished free transportation to such as are contemplated by the law provided for consolidated school district), and that has already constructed and furnished a suitable building of not fewer than three rooms, upon making proof of compliance with the foregoing provisions approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall have drawn by the State Auditor upon the State Treasury against said building fund in favor of the treasurer of said consolidated school district, a warrant for a sum not to exceed one-half the cost of said building. Provided, that in no case shall any district receive a sum exceeding twenty-five hundred (\$2,500.00) dollars, from the appropriation herein made; provided, that the State Board of Education may decrease this amount if in its judgment the amount is greater than a fair proportion belonging to one district.

Section 6. Whenever a school district of not less than twenty-five (25) square miles in area shall have been established and conducted for a period of not less than six months under the terms of existing laws with reference to the consolidation of schools, and a building containing not fewer than three rooms, suitably constructed, equipped and furnished shall have been built, and a graded school employing not less than three teachers shall have been conducted for a term of not less than six months, upon making proof of compliance with the foregoing provisions approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall have drawn a warrant in favor of the district treasurer as provided in Section 5 of this act.

For Additional Information

The most valuable information with reference to consolidation is that based on the facts of experience. We therefore advise those who are desirous of looking up the subject in all its aspects, and of ascertaining more fully the results of experience in other places, to write to the State Superintendents of those states where consolidated schools have been established, particularly of those states where conditions are similar to ours, for their latest publications on the subject; also to Dr. A. C. True, office of Experiment Stations, Washington, D. C., for the very valuable pamphlets on consolidation issued by the Government.



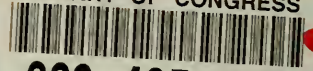
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